UN's UNEASY VILLAGE
— John McKeon

THE

Commonweal

THE WELFARE STATE
Eugene J. McCarthy

Priest-Workers in France
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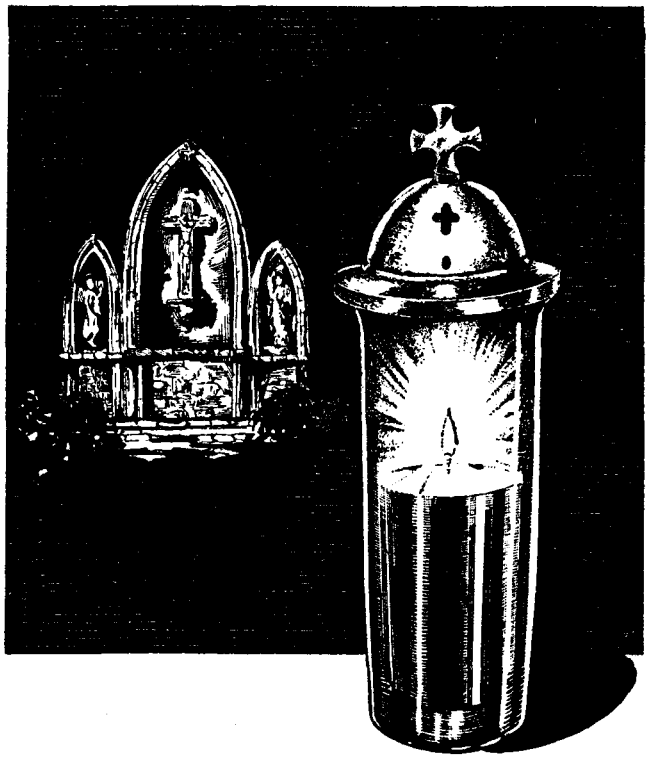

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THE Commonweal

week by week

THE UN—THIRD PHASE

WHEN the United Nations Charter was adopted at San Francisco seven years ago, hopes for the new international organization ran high. Nazism had been met head on and defeated; the world had been delivered from a great scourge. Many who had been languishing in chains were freed at last. And after so many years of terrible war the peoples in the world were one in their desire for lasting peace. The United Nations was the tangible embodiment of a hope that was as ardent as it was universal.

The mood soon changed. From the new organization's very first sessions the USSR showed unmistakably that it regarded the UN not as a means of building the peace but as a Soviet weapon. For the Russians obstructionism was the order of the day—insistence on all sorts of delaying technicalities, which kept putting off UN decisions, and resort to the veto whenever a decision threatened that was not to the Soviet's liking. In its first months of operation the UN's hands were so shackled by Kremlin tactics that it stood by virtually powerless as the USSR expanded into Eastern Europe and consolidated its growing postwar conquests.

This second phase was a period of great disillusionment throughout the United States. Many hopes for the UN went aglimmering. (Even so, however, the performances of the Russian delegates on televised sessions did more to convince the American people that the Soviet Union threatened our freedom than anything but the attack on South Korea itself.) Yet the general feeling was that security had to be sought elsewhere.

The outbreak of the Korean War and the UN resistance to this act of aggression (made easier by the Soviet Union's self-imposed temporary absence from the Security Council) have done little to modify our national disillusionment. Sessions of the Council and the General Assembly have been dominated by the cold war even to this day. Soviet charges and counter-charges have continued to take the spotlight here and across the seas.

The cold war is as prominent as ever in the current sessions of the UN General Assembly, with Mr. Acheson and Mr. Vishinsky in their familiar roles as adamant antagonists. The Korean War itself has, as it should, the leading place on the agenda of the next two months.

But there are other leading agenda items which may herald a third phase for the United Nations. These are centered around the colonial problem: the French colonies in North Africa and the status of non-Caucasians in the Union of South Africa. To be sure, these are situations in which Soviet Russia is vitally interested; they serve as opportunities for agitation against the West. Moreover the USSR manifests every intention of exploiting these controversies to the utmost in order to sow dissension among the United States and her allies.

COLONIAL questions do, however, have an importance quite beyond any Soviet machinations. The demand for justice on the part of the economically underdeveloped peoples is increasingly insistent. It requires no stimulus from abroad. The growing strength of the Arab-Asia bloc, with frequent support from the Latin-American nations, is a fact to be reckoned with, quite apart from the titanic battle with the Soviets.

For one thing it demonstrates that victory over Communism, essential as it is for worldwide peace and security, will not end the major problems in the world. In some respects the underprivileged peoples present an even bigger task. The objects of the Point Four idea—so little of which has come to practical realization—are highly desirable in themselves (as well as useful toward containment). In fact the Soviet threat only increases the urgency of full-scale economic development.

As an international organization the UN is eminently fitted to tackle the task of bringing the living standards of two-thirds of the people on the globe to a level consonant with human dignity. It can do so without fear of imperialism or of vassal-like dependence on any one nation. It can call upon the best technicians from many lands. It will carry on this work to fulfill the objectives of its Charter.

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So that while the debates on Korea and other sectors of the cold war will continue to capture the big headlines, it is important to remember that even with the limited funds at its disposal the UN is even now engaged in much constructive work throughout the world. It has gone much further in this respect than the League of Nations. The problem of the colonial and other economically underveloped peoples insistently demands a viable solution. The best prospect for attaining this is assuredly through a great expansion of the present development program now operating under the auspices of the UN.

THE SPOTLIGHT OF PUBLICITY

DURING any campaign as hotly contested as that of 1952, it is understandable that feelings should run high. Almost every day brought its rash of charges and counter-charges, most of which will be speedily forgotten after November 4th, when it will be possible for all concerned to take a more objective view of the situation. But the implications of the Nixon affair are important enough that it should not be relegated to the dead files on a hard-fought battle for the Presidency.

No man can say for sure whether Nixon's presence on the ticket was, in the end, an aid or a hindrance to General Eisenhower. But aside from such short-range aspects, publicity on the Nixon affair, coming on top of scandals in the Internal Revenue Department, did a certain amount of good. It emphasized the need for action on the question of substantial salary increases for Senators, Representatives and top government officials, if government office is not to become the pregrogative of the wealthy. And the disclosure of the Nixon fund and the hints that such funds exist for the benefit of other legislators make it imperative that such endowments be thrown open to public scrutiny.

Long before the Nixon affair, President Truman suggested to Congress that legislators and top government officials be required to file annual statements which would itemize income received from sources outside the government. At the time, Mr. Truman's proposal was given the quick brush-off. Now, with the memory of the Nixon fund as a spur, this proposal should be re-examined.

If the law requires a report on campaign contributions, certainly funds such as that enjoyed by Senator Nixon should be a matter of public knowledge, along with the names of those making such contributions to individual legislators. Before the recent disclosures during the campaign, many honest men in Congress may have felt that public disclosure of income was at once unnecessary and an undue invasion of privacy. But the possibilities for abuse involved in private endowment of legislators should now be obvious enough for priority to be given to corrective legislation.

NEXT WEEK

WILL HERBERG writes about church-state relations in the new nation of Israel, with the resultant tensions.

"I do not want to give the impression that these tensions and conflicts are exclusively the result of Orthodox intransigence. Far from it; the secularists on their side . . . are quite as set in their determination to complete the thorough-going secularization of Israeli life. . . . The 'laic' sentiment in Israel reminds one of the anti-clerical movement in France a generation ago: it is more than simply anti-clerical; it is anti-religious and reflects a challenge to Jewish religion on the part of an aggressive, proselytizing secularist quasi-religion making its bid for the possession of the minds and souls of the younger generation."

COMMUNISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

THE news from the Philippines is at once good and bad. Due to the vigorous conduct of Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay, considerable progress has been made against the Communist-inspired guerilla forces, known as the Huks. But there is no prospect at this time of any complete delivery from fear of the guerrilla irregulars, and this fact illustrates a problem faced everywhere by leaders in the fight against Communism.

Although the Huks are led by Communists, their strength is rooted in the discontent of non-Communist peasants whose grievances are genuine and not easily cured. Guerrilla activity of the type now being carried on would be impossible were it not for widespread poverty and unrest. These, rather than any ideological convictions, are the major allies of the revolutionary leaders.

Absentee ownership of land, prohibitively high rents and usurious interest rates combine to make landless tenants susceptible to Huk recruiting appeals. In his fight against the guerilla bands, Magsaysay himself has utilized the traditional hunger of the peasant for his own land. But he is not the whole government, and there are limits to his powers.

If the Huks are not to remain a naggingly persis-

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tent threat to the security of the islands, a vigorous, island-wide program of reform, designed to remove present social and economic abuses, is a necessity. Good police work and efficient security systems are essential in the fight against Communism. But by themselves they are not enough to win.

THIRD PARTIES IN AMERICA

THE two-party system is accepted in the United States as so basic to our constitutional processes and traditions that third (or "splinter") parties are widely regarded as either eccentric or suspect. Given the latitudinarian structure of our two major parties, each encompassing within its generous folds men of radically divergent points of view, would-be third parties in America must usually rely on die-hard ideologues for their membership, and the number of these now seems at a low ebb.

Such has not always been the case. Even in quite recent elections, various third parties been played a significant role, either as influencing the actual result or as a "protest" vote of sufficient size to warrant the attention of the major parties.

But none of these splinter movements has taken permanent roots in our national life, and the campaign of 1952 has been remarkable for the absence of any significant voices protesting against the major trends of American politics. Mr. Wallace's Progressive movement of 1948, with its loss of Mr. Wallace himself, lost what little claim it ever had to the sympathies of non-fellow-traveling progressives, and the only state where any promise of real influence was left it this year was New York.

The extreme right, as an independent force in American politics, currently shares the fate of its leftist counterpart. Its members certainly have no love for General Eisenhower, but many of them who have wished to influence the real world have been driven, through their fear of the left, to vote Republican this year, just as many leftists, though they can have taken little comfort from Mr. Stevenson's campaign, have decided to choose him as "the lesser of two evils." The third party vote is thus reduced to the small minority at each extreme which is willing to sacrifice real influence for the sake of its ideological purity.

This present lack of effective third parties in America may be interpreted by some as proof of an essentially unhealthy lack of daring and vigor among American voters. It is, indeed, so decried by the extremists themselves, who complain with increasing bitterness that they have no place to go in American politics. And so, Colonel McCormick recently pleaded for the formation of a new "American" party, even though he gave a grudging endorsement to General Eisenhower, while T. O. Thackrey, of the New York *Compass*, urged a large vote for the Progressive party's state candidates, even though he announced that his own Presidential choice was, again grudgingly, Governor Stevenson.

But in spite of these hopes for renewed third party strength, it seems that their role in American politics must remain one of preparation and conservation rather than one of ultimate direction. The permanence of the two-party system in our national life is perhaps a result of a deeply ingrained pragmatism in the American temperament, which leads Americans, more than any other people, to conceive of politics as an art of the possible rather than as a full-scale ideological crusade.

Third parties, because they usually offer causes with no hope of effects, have little chance of attracting sufficient support among Americans to lend them major stature. Their function in our national life is thus the negative role of protest and indirect influence on the major parties.

Their present low estate may be a cause for some concern as a reflection upon the healthy diversity of our cultural patterns, but it seems likely that for a long time to come those who wish to influence the actual course of American politics must do so through our traditional two-party system.

PARTISAN SYMPOSIUM

TWO years ago the *Partisan Review* published a long symposium on "Religion and the Intellectuals." In it, a large number of American and European writers commented, with varying degrees of philosophical acumen, on what the review's editors remarked as an increasing interest in, and receptivity to, religion among contemporary thinkers.

In its past three issues the *Partisan* has published another symposium, this time on a subject in which its contributors have demonstrated a more universal competence. Writing on "Our Country and Our Culture" a representative group of American intellectuals have agreed with the *Partisan* editors that a real change has occurred among American writers during the past decade regarding their attitudes toward the United States.

The change observed is from an attitude of patronizing tolerance to one of open, if sometimes troubled, acceptance. This marks a significant coming-of-age among writers in America, and the provocative discussion it has received in the *Partisan* is a healthy tribute to the reality of its triumph.

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AFTER THE STORM

As this page is being written, the campaign fires are still roaring furiously; but when it is read, in all probability the election will be history.

Like many others, I was able—through television—to follow this campaign more closely than any other one. From the days of the Chicago conventions right through to the Eisenhower blitz-commercials in the final weeks, the campaign was kept constantly rolling. The television industry did a remarkably good job of keeping interest high, with speeches, forums, panel discussions, news pictures, etc. It seems to me that, generally speaking, both sides were given equal opportunity to get their case before the people.

Each party brought forth its most effective apologists, and on several programs the issues were pinpointed by expert reporters and political commentators who saw to it that the apologists were properly cross-examined. A notable exception, it seems to me in looking back, was the Longines Chronoscope program, which consistently had a decidedly Republican bias. Members of both parties were interviewed on that program, three nights a week. When it was a Republican, the questions were usually lead-sentences for partisan editorials; when it was a Democrat, the helpful questioners became prosecuting attorneys.

An odd thing about a campaign like the one just finished is how the main business at hand so often gets sidetracked in a barrage of charges and counter-charges. Did he say *this,* or did he say *that?* Or did he say neither but only something that sounded like *this* to the Republicans and like *that* to the Democrats? Actually, of course, it was rarely all-important whether he said this or that—the issue was peripheral in the first place.

When General Eisenhower spoke of "liberating" the peoples behind the Iron Curtain, a small hurricane was unloosed. According to the Democrats, "liberation" meant a third World War. According to the Republicans, it meant no such thing. "Liberation" didn't imply liberating by force at all. It was a manner of speaking about how our present policy could be more dynamically expressed.

Spokesmen in the debate, in both parties, seemed to agree that they didn't want to take an army into Eastern Europe. When that became clear, the argument petered out. The Demos couldn't hold on to the issue they saw in the controversy: that Eisenhower was planning military action. And the GOP knew that they couldn't go on talking about "liberation" if they hoped to convince people that they didn't intend to use military means. We were left with our present policy and the basic question of which party could better implement it.

President Truman, in the course of his campaigning, called the McCarran Immigration bill "anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic" and said that in embracing politicos who favored the bill Eisenhower suffered a moment of "moral blindness." By giving such men his support, according to Truman, Eisenhower accepted the practices which characterized believers in a master race.

This controversy had several interesting effects. The Republicans gleefully charged Truman with calling Eisenhower anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic. Several prominent Jews and Catholics then made warm statements about Eisenhower's tolerance, and Harry Truman hotly denied that he had ever said Eisenhower was a bigot. For a few days the matter flared. As Republicans denied vigorously that Eisenhower was a bigot, Democrats just as vigorously denied that anyone ever said he was.

When it was all over, there could be no doubt in anyone's mind that Eisenhower is untouched by racial or religious prejudice. But the restrictive nature of the McCarran bill became clearly focused as a result of the bitter exchange. Eisenhower, who had not previously spoken on the bill, came out against it, and Senator Nixon, who voted for it, changed his mind and agreed that it should be revised. But it took a lot of angry words before that much clarity came through.

Another surprising aspect of the campaign was the low shocking point of some of our sophisticated political figures. Just about every day someone said he was "shocked beyond measure" by the opposition's tactics. I think that Governor Dewey easily wins the prize for being the most shockable. At one point he was extremely "shocked" to learn that White Supremacy is a political doctrine in the South; on a television program I watched he was "shocked" by Adlai Stevenson's "demagogy" in releasing his income tax statement —though it was Senator Nixon who had publicly challenged his opponents to make a financial accounting and no one had thought of doing so until the famous Poor Richard broadcast.

Actually, I don't think the release of income figures changed a single vote, unless Nixon by his ultimate refusal to play his own game created some suspicion that might not otherwise have been a factor. In any case, the matter gave Governor Dewey another opportunity to be "shocked" beyond words when Stevenson played along, and a few Democrats to be horribly "shocked" when Nixon himself didn't.

We will have to wait four more years, I suspect, before being given an example of such moral sensitivity as became commonplace during the weeks of campaign when the sensibilities of even the most unlikely people seemed to be hourly assaulted.

JOHN COGLEY.

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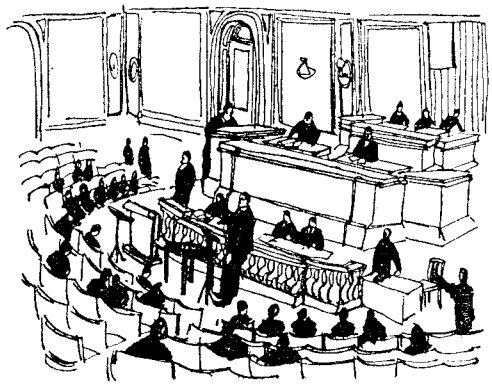
The Welfare State

THE WORDS MAY DESCRIBE THE "ROAD TO DESTRUCTION" OR THE STATE'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELFARE OF ITS CITIZENS

EUGENE J. McCARTHY

IT is difficult to remain objective and non-partisan in a discussion of the "welfare state." The term was popularized for political reasons in the campaign of 1950 and has come into use again in the current campaign. Its meaning is very flexible. For Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr., writing in The Commonweal some months ago, it is identical with "the state" and, in his opinion, both must go. In John T. Flynn's best-selling political travel guide, it is "the road along which this country is traveling to its destruction." For Dean Manion, in the Heritage Foundation edition of his *Key to Peace,* under the more threatening name of "statism," it means nearly all things bad, including the French Revolution and the British Government at the time of the American Revolution. For John Foster Dulles, under the same name, it "represents man's conceit that he can build better than God."



On the other hand, Father Parsons, writing in *America* in December, 1949, pointed out that "Catholic professors of the Social Sciences have long calmly spoken of 'the welfare state' in an approving manner as describing the plan of the Encyclicals." The same term has respectable standing among non-Catholic students and teachers of the Social Sciences. When the Constitutional Convention finished its work at Philadelphia approximately one hundred and sixty years ago, the words "welfare" and "state" were both acceptable. The authors of the Constitution did not hesitate to declare in the preamble of that document that "to promote the general welfare" was one of the principal functions of the state

Their political philosophy was sound. It was based upon acceptance of the idea that the state, or government, has a positive responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. It was based upon the realization that government does have a responsibility, not only to protect and police its citizens, but also to assist them in securing those things that are necessary for their physical well being, and necessary also as a condition to intellectual and spiritual growth.

The story of Western civilization is, in large measure, the record of man's efforts to improve and perfect human society. This record has individual and personal aspects, but social and political aspects as well. These social and political problems were the concern of the ancient Greek political thinkers, of the Roman jurists, of the medieval canonists—of philosophers and of men of action, the politicians. I hesitate to accuse men like Plato and Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Thomas More, or Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton, with "conceit that they could build better than God."

The problem of the "welfare state" raises many questions. The question of whether or not the state has a right to interfere in the economic and social order is not one of them. This right is clearly established by philosophy and by historical experience. If one is going to argue about the "welfare state," it is necessary that he have in mind either an existing state, one that has existed in history, or a specific proposal or plan for such a state. There is a great difference between the "welfare state" program in Soviet Russia today and the "welfare state" program in the United States. There is a great difference between the "welfare state" program proposed by Karl Marx and that proposed by Pope Pius XII. Let us begin with the papal proposals as a point of departure for an examination of the welfare program existing in the United States.

POPE PIUS XII lists the following as the fundamental pre-requisites of social justice: "1) a wage that will cover the living expenses of the family and, as such, will make it possible for parents to fulfill their

Mr. McCarthy is a member of the House of Representatives from Minnesota. He formerly taught at St. Thomas College, in St. Paul.

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natural duty to rear children who will be healthfully nourished and well clothed; 2) a dwelling worthy of human beings; 3) the possibility of securing for children sufficient instruction and a becoming education; 4) of fore-seeing and fore-stalling times of stress, and sickness and old age."

If we agree that Pope Pius has here defined a minimum program of social justice, it follows that legislation designed to provide fair and just treatment of working men, to insure minimum wages and to protect farmers against loss of income through crop failure and depressed farm prices, is certainly defensible. It follows, too, that a case can be made for programs to provide a measure of security against the uncertainties of unemployment, of disabling accidents, of sickness and old age, and that legislation to assist families in acquiring adequate housing and adequate education for the children is in order. Yet the specific programs and proposals to accomplish these purposes are the very ones which, day in and day out, in the press and in public speeches, are labeled as dangerously "collectivist," "socialist" or even "communist," as comprising the "welfare state."

There are three fair questions regarding the welfare program in the United States:

1. Has it gone far enough or has it gone too far?
2. Have the means and methods used been the best?
3. Is our program set in a pattern which will eventually lead to totalitarianism?

Examined by the standard of the proposals of Pope Pius XII, the program in the United States appears to be within limits. Our minimum wage law is certainly modest. We do not have a federal Fair Employment Practices Act. Agriculture remains a high-risk, low-income occupation. The housing needs of the nation are not yet satisfied, and the special needs of the middle income families have not received legislative recognition. The Social Security Program has been improved and broadened, but there remain great gaps in it, too.

We have not really approached the goal of "fore-stalling times of sickness" as set forth by Pope Pius XII, or the goal of "insuring our workers against accident and ill health," as defined by General Eisenhower in his Boise, Idaho, speech. Leaders of both major political parties have recognized the need for a program to assist the people of the United States in meeting costs resulting from unusual and catastrophic sickness or disabling accidents. It is becoming increasingly clear that the present unemployment compensation program is inadequate to meet the demands made upon it by the extreme shifts of industry which occurred during the war and postwar period, and which are likely to continue in the rapidly changing economy of the United States. There is daily demand for increased government aid to education at both the national and state level.

The serious question about the "welfare state program" in the United States, is that of means and methods. Whereas it is true to say that, theoretically, government should do for its citizens only what they cannot do for themselves, in the practical situation it may be sometimes necessary to do for them what they should and could do for themselves, but do not do either individually or through corporate efforts below the level of government action. In any governmental program, the principle of subsidiarity should be observed, in so far as it is possible or practicable. Individuals and families should first be assisted. Non-governmental agencies and organizations, such as co-operatives, should be permitted, aided and encouraged in their efforts to meet social problems. Those agencies of government which are closest to the problem and closest to the people, should, in accordance with their strength and authority, assume responsibility. Eventually, of course, the Federal Government must accept some responsibility.

AS a matter of fact, this principle of subsidiarity has been surprisingly well observed in the division of authority in the welfare program of the United States. Only two of the numerous programs generally included in the "welfare state" are administered by the federal government alone: the Social Security Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Of these two, the second is limited to interstate commercial activities, which, under the Constitution, fall under federal jurisdiction. The Old Age Assistance program is a joint federal-state project, with the states in turn passing some responsibilities on to local governing units. The Public Housing Act required participation of state and local governments. The farm program is, of course, principally a federal activity, but it too requires participation of state and local governments, as well as the participation of farmers and farm organizations. Aid to education has been reserved for the most part to state and local governments. The contribution of the federal government, excepting the direct aid given to veterans under the "GI Bill," is limited for the most part to special aids for such things as vocational agriculture and home economics. General educational aid at the elementary and secondary levels has been granted only in those areas where defense activities have imposed an unusual burden upon local school facilities, or where they have taken away or reduced the local tax resources. The unemployment insurance and workingmen's compensation programs remain principally matters of state law and state administration.

It is clear from this cursory examination of the "welfare state" that our private lives are not subject to the "bureaucratic control" of the federal government, as is so often charged. The "control" is distributed among the various government units, local, state and federal.

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Critics of the "welfare state" will usually grant that the state does have some right to interfere in economic and social life. They may even admit that a general program such as that outlined by Pope Pius XII is defensible and concede that the program in the United States has not gone too far. Ordinarily, however, they will make a final stand on the argument that once a "welfare" program has begun, it inevitably continues by some inner dynamic until all human activities have been subjected to state control. This predicted progression is ordinarily defined as "creeping socialism."

There is nothing inevitable about government change as long as responsible citizens control their own government. England and Australia have "socialized" themselves beyond the limits set by the New Deal and Fair Deal. In each of these countries political, economic and social conditions are very different from those prevailing in the United States. In each case, the process, if it can be called that, has stopped short, a long distance from complete socialization. In both countries, the program has been moderated, and in some respects reversed. It is encouraging to note, too, that in other European countries, socialization or an inordinate extension of the welfare program has run into difficulties when it reached into the cultural field of education and of religion. In those countries where political action remains free, the area of the mind and of the spirit has been successfully defended.

IN conclusion, let me point out what I believe to be a reasonable attitude toward the "welfare state." If, by the term, we mean to define a state which undertakes to control every action of its citizens, a state which enters into every phase of life, unduly restricting freedom, not only at the economic level, but also at the level of the intellect and of the spirit, seeking to determine personality so as to fit each person into the totalitarian pattern, that "welfare state" is to be condemned.

If, however, we use the term "welfare state" with somewhat more regard for its established and traditional meaning, it is a good and usable term. It then describes a state which is seeking to meet its institutional responsibilities in assisting its citizens in their efforts to secure those things which are necessary to the good lfe, to the happiness of man. It then describes a state which is seeking to accomplish what Dr. Heinrich Rommen defines as the basic purpose of government; namely, "that of bringing about peaceful change in accordance with the demands of distributive justice."

The government, that is, the state, which seeks to establish a political order "in accordance with the demands of distributive justice" may well be called a "welfare state." It is the kind of state to which we have been committed from the beginning of our national existence, and beyond that, from the very beginnings of Western civilization.

United Nations' Uneasy Village

JOHN McKEON

THE Press Liaison Officer's room was a cluttered cubicle overlooking First Avenue and the main entrance to the UN building. From the window one had a fine view of the torn-up street and the construction gangs at work and, farther up the avenue, the long file of UN nations' standards straining their halyards in the East River wind. At the 43rd street intersection a small group of Ukrainian nationalists stared fixedly at the beached whale hump of the new Assembly quarters from their vantage point on the traffic island. *"Go Home Vishinsky"* their picket signs read. *"Go Home Murderer," "Thirty Four Million Ukrainians Suffer Under Your Master's Heel."* The traffic streamed by them without pause, honking irritably at the pace of the late afternoon crush.

The Press Liaison officer surveyed the clutter of his cubicle and sighed, tossing a bright covered portfolio of Esquire Calendar Girls from the top of his littered desk to the window sill and then, going around the desk, sank gratefully into the swivel chair. He was a South American in his middle thirties who spoke flawless New Yorkese and had the combined look of exhaustion, courtesy and strangled irritability that stigmatizes a man who believes in the innate worth of his job but has long since given up any hope of gaining understanding or sympathy from people he deals with in an official capacity.

"About Parkway Village," he sighed again, lit a cigarette and began to speak. "One of the troubles with the UN is that everything is from diplomacy. It has to be. After all, that's its function. But a press officer winds up like a grocer who's asked for a pound of something. He knows there's sixteen ounces in a pound and he weighs it nine times to make sure there's sixteen ounces and then he winds up giving the customer twelve as a matter of principle. He has to because he can never be sure the customer is going to put those four ounces to a good use. Everything that happens is true, but Truth depends on who writes it and who reads it. So you wind up thinking that the less that's written about the UN the less chance there is for error. A swell spot for a press officer."

He considered the tip of his cigarette for a moment. "Parkway Village is a good human interest story. Some

Mr. McKeon was until recently editor of the Santa Fe Register. He is now living in New York.

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two thousand people from all over the world, every race and color, living in the same community and surmounting problems of language and background. *Life* did a spread recently on the International School kids. Good human interest stuff. Experiment in Democracy and all. But you wanted the background on the housing situation. Well, from here on in it's strictly from diplomacy.

"It's true that the situation at present is a little ticklish. Nobody wants to talk about it very much in the UN. After all, we're more or less guests in the country and a lot of people have gone out of their way to be nice to us. But there *has* been a little scuffle with the Savings Banks which put up the project. The units were put up originally to rent at $25 a room. The average rental in Parkway was to be $110 a month. What is it now? Well, it varies. The tenants, that is, the UN personnel living there, are carrying on negotiations with the banks over lease adjustments. The banks have them over a barrel because the color of a lot of the tenants makes it difficult for them to get housing in New York."

THE phone rang and as the press officer lifted it from the cradle the door swung in again and three men entered. The first, a short, stocky, baldheaded man wearing a grey tweed suit and a gold rimmed pincenez began a rapid flow of soft, sibilant Spanish about the inadequacy of the press wire arrangements for "correspondents of independence," while the man behind him, who looked somewhat like a youthful Somerset Maugham in an RAF mustache, peered over his shoulder, grinned affably, said, "Sorry. Didn't know you were occupied," and pushed his way out.

The press officer nodded into the phone without looking at any of the newcomers, said, "O.K. O.K. I'll be right over," hung up the phone and gave a short rapid speech in Spanish to the baldheaded man. The tenor of the speech was that new arrangements always take time to straighten out and everything would be fixed in a day or two. As the door of the cubicle swung to, behind the Spanish correspondent, the third man stepped forward and the press officer sank back in the swivel chair. "Yes, Nikolai?"

The man called Nikolai was tall, with a bony angular face and the lank blond hair of the Slav. "How come no box for Russian correspondents?" he said. "AP, UP, Reuters, Domestics; everyone taken care of but us." The press officer lit another cigarette from the tip of the old one and then said mildly, "You know how it is with them. All those services are competitive. They have to have direct wires. Your people aren't competitive. You can use the Western Union wire service easily enough."

Nikolai shrugged in obvious irritation and said, "I disagree. We are in competition as much as AP, UP and Reuters, regardless of what anyone says. *Pravda* and *Izvestia* are in competition, and then, there is the twelve hour time difference with us." The press officer picked up a pencil from the desk and started doodling idly on the telephone pad. His quandary was fairly apparent.

Nikolai had a good argument. Except of course that it was an article of faith all over the Western World that *Pravda* and *Izvestia* are *not* in competition and the arrangements for press boxes in the New Assembly Hall had obviously been made on that basis. The difficulty with the Russians was that they always demanded justice from the world at large in the light of the assumed validity of their political philosophy. The papal claim of infallibility regarding spiritual matters is irritating enough for the rational-humanist West to put up with; but the Russian claim of infallibility in temporal matters becomes intolerable when the West finds itself consistently hoisted on its own petard of compromise and willingness to mediate all differences.

The phone rang again and the press officer sighed. "Pay day in a mad house," he said in a resigned voice and then leaned forward before picking up the phone to scribble a name on the telephone pad. "Tell you what. About that Parkway Village article. You go up and see M—— in the Social Affairs Division. He's on the Tenant's Bargaining Committee. Handled their negotiations with the Banks." He lifted the phone and Nikolai began again, "As it is now with Tass . . ." The closing door of the cubicle cut off the rest.

A FRENCHMAN in his fifties, M—— wore impeccable tweeds and the black Edwardian beard which still survives in French naval and medical circles. His office on the thirty-eighth floor of the Secretariat Building was large, uncluttered and overlooked the East River and the industrial wasteland of Flushing. When the conversation got around to rent hikes at the UN village of Parkway and the reason for the UN's turning the leases back to the Savings Banks, his manner immediately became frigid and wary.

"I don't mind telling you, sir, that negotiations with the banks are, at this time, extremely delicate." He repeated the phrase "extremely delicate" and pressed the tips of his fingers together in a peak, staring at his uncluttered desk. "Frankly," he said, looking up and smiling benevolently, "I don't know whether I can answer any questions about the savings banks at all at this time. You will readily understand that anything that would put those negotiations in jeopardy would work a great hardship on some of the tenants of Parkway Village. You wouldn't want that. One can never tell about publicity. Several months ago it might have been different. We tried then to find living quarters

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for some colored tenants of Parkway Village in Harlem and other areas. *Sub rosa* of course. Discreet inquiries. I don't mind telling you that prices for suitable quarters were simply extortionate. These people of ours have all reached a high standard of eminence in their professions in their native countries before they joined the Secretariat, you understand. Intellectually and socially they are an acquisition to any community. Regrettably, communities other than Parkway Village are difficult for them to find. Not the Chinese I understand. They would have no such difficulty. No, I would not say that it is a regrettable introduction to American Democracy. Every country has its customs and attitudes. It is only in God that we meet—how shall I phrase it?—without differences."

He smiled benevolently again and turned to look at a yellow Post Office helicopter droning like a tired hornet past the window. "Frankly you would have to ask Mr. Trygve Lie why the UN allowed the leases to go back to the Savings Banks. I am not at liberty to say. I regret not being able to help you. Perhaps if you saw A—— in the Statistics Division. He is on the Tenant's Committee also. And remember, do, please, that negotiations in the matter are very delicate."

A—— WAS a Canadian national who had the dead end of an office corridor on the thirty-ninth floor for working quarters. He attempted to extricate himself from the paraphernalia of his trade behind which he was barricaded—dictaphone, adding machine, computators, typewriter—but gave up with a grin and extended his hand over them in greeting. He was a young man with quick, alert grey eyes behind rimless glasses and a mathematician's diffidence in the face of subjective phenomena.

"The bank's position is a little hard to understand," he said. "Hard for us out at Parkway Village that is. Of course, they have their figures to prove their case and we have ours. Your appreciation of the truth of the matter all depends on where you sit." He pushed a dictaphone to one side of the desk in order to cross his legs and then continued.

"When the UN moved down from Lake Success the problem for Secretariat members where housing was concerned became acute. A number of Savings Banks in New York—Seaman's, Drydock and others, got together to put up funds for a UN Village to house all the members in one community. When the project was completed the UN took over the leases for a limited time. It was an emergency measure really. The UN never expected to go in the realty business. Parkway Village, when it was completed, had six hundred and eighty-five garden-type apartments and the first families entered in the Fall of '47. There are some two thousand people there now. Not all UN people, of course. There are about two hundred non-UN and a hundred GI families. UN secretariat members and their families compose about sixty per cent of the tenants.

"The banks claim it took $11,500,000 to build, but the city of New York assessed it at $5,600,000. Possibly because they wanted to be hospitable to the UN families. We have to live relatively close to our headquarters, and then the Hindu, Moslem and colored members found it nearly impossible to get any kind of living quarters at all. Anyhow, immediately after building, the banks claimed that the rent was not going to pay a fair return on the investment.

He stared at some figures a moment as if digesting them thoroughly and then turned back. "All I can say is that if those figures are true the bank wants to have it's cake and eat it too. There are three main categories of salary for foreign Secretariat employees: $7-8000; $5-6000; and $3-4000. And of those three the last two are by far the most numerous. The banks wanted a thirty per cent rent hike when the UN surrendered the leases to them. It was an impossible demand. A good many of the tenants were already paying thirty per cent and more of their income for rent. Which is why the UN has found it difficult to build a permanent staff on a career basis. Foreign Secretariat members simply resign and go home because they can live better there. I don't know the exact figures of the turnover but they are high. Anyhow, in the end, the banks deigned to accept an average eleven per cent hike. They have a white elephant for an investment and want to sweat-out the capital involved as soon and as much as possible."

He laughed and stood up, extending his hand. "It's too bad that principles alone don't move men. There usually has to be some added factor like an economic squeeze or general calamity before everyone starts acting like brothers. The bigger the squeeze the sooner the brotherhood arrives."

He finally managed to extricate himself from behind the barricade of machines and started to walk in pace down the corridor toward the elevator. "Will printing any of this jeopardize negotiations with the banks? Oh, you mean M——? No, the majority of new leases have been signed and you see it according to where you sit I guess. You see, not all the tenants are getting the same rent hikes. Some are getting proportionately better terms than others . . . " He grinned again.

Outside the Secretariat Building the agile autumn dusk had leaped the river and stood astride Manhattan. The traffic still beetled past, bumper to bumper and honking irritably. The Ukrainians were disbanding at the traffic island on 43rd, walking west toward the subway with their picket signs frugally carried at the trail for tomorrow's duty. There was room for a lot of brotherhood in the world and it wasn't always a fair return on invested capital that was getting in the way of its realization.

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FROM FRANCE

The Priest-Workers and Their Revolution

WHEN two curates from a workingmen's parish in Paris were arrested for taking part in a demonstration against American General Ridgway, which was instigated by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), they were manhandled by the police and later protested vigorously to the French papers. I shall not go into the problem of police brutality, which is so common, or of the effect of this incident on the masses in France. The central question is that these priests took part in a political demonstration. Was it their place to do so? Did they consider it their duty to demonstrate against General Ridgway?

If they were indifferent to the reasons behind the demonstration, did they feel that their solidarity with the labor movement was so great that they could no longer refuse certain exterior gestures which brought them closer to the movement, but which cut them off further from the rest of the Catholic body?

There are not nearly as many worker-priests as people think—barely a hundred in all France. Those engaged in the Mission de Paris number twenty-five. Eighteen priests are employed as manual laborers, factory workers in metallurgical and automobile plants and truck drivers. The others are engaged in special work, such as scientific social research or the study of prostitution. What identifies them as belonging to the Mission is not the fact that they do manual labor but that their lives mark them as men of the people—they share the same environment, the same dress (they do not wear the ancient and cumbersome Latin soutaine), the same manner of living, the same anxieties. They are priest-workers who have a common destiny with the worker. They live in poor rooms in the workingmen's quarters of Paris or in the city's slum-like suburbs, often in small groups.

Outside of Paris a dozen dioceses have engaged in similar undertakings. There are priest-workers in the port city of Bordeaux and in the Alpine districts. They remain in close communication with their bishops. There are also a score of priests from the religious orders: Jesuits, Capuchins, Franciscans, Dominicans.

Besides these there are the Little Brothers of Charles de Foucauld about whom I wrote in the October 3rd issue—men who live and labor in the midst of workingmen but whose lives are focused on contemplation and worship. Finally, there are certain parish priests who work in factories several months of the year, or even the year round.

Naturally so bold and new an undertaking challenges many elements in the present structure of the church and in the habitual ways of thinking and acting among Catholics. This was brought out clearly by a conversation I had with one of these priests two years ago.

I HAD gone to see the priest in the ancient street of Montreuil where he lived. He had a tiny apartment, furnished with an old bureau, a cot and a nondescript cupboard. He was a brawny man about forty years old, with black curly hair and the virile, animated features of a popular movie hero. He wore workmen's trousers, a pull-over with a roll collar and a GI jacket. He told me he did not hold with any mystique of the worker.

"There is no virtue in the proletariat *per se*," he said. "But the workers are a people on the march, inspired by tremendous hopes. Perhaps because they suffer, maybe because they have nothing to lose or because they are at the bottom of the abyss—in any case, they possess capacities for love and selflessness such as the bourgeois are incapable of . . . Here there are only the poor, poor in this world's goods and poor in spirit, little children who ask only to be heard, to do better."

He told of astounding instances of charity among the many worker families with whom he was acquainted. "The more I see the more I am convinced that the Church, as so many times in the missionary past, is going to find vast resources in the people. They tell us that priests think they are competent to decide everything. That may still be true in the Cameroons, but here I have learned it is not so. We have to go to school, to watch, be silent and learn how to receive instead of always wanting to give."

Finally, when I asked him what was needed to rescue this proletariat from its material and spiritual misery, he looked me in the eye—with the air of a man who had already carefully weighed his answer—and said: "Revolution." I was somewhat taken aback. "Not revolution in the Communist sense of the word. But I do think that an attack must be made on capitalism, money, on the anarchy and oppressiveness of *laissez faire*. Christian life is not possible for all these human beings unless a society in which it is possible to live as men is re-established for them. How can souls grow and develop when everything tends to enslave them? Here at Montreuil I know of nine hundred families without homes and twenty-eight hundred family groups or individuals who live in hotel rooms—and what rooms and what hotels!"

Around this man a Christian community sprang up little by little. He shared the lot of the most wretched, working in a factory and picking rags from refuse heaps, in order truly to know the anguish of the poor from

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within. He lived selflessly, giving up his bed to some homeless wretch and sleeping on the floor, giving his pullover to some fellow suffering from the cold, his bread to anyone who was hungry.

For all the unfortunate, the disinherited who met him along the way, he became more than an ecclesiastical bureaucrat, a man from another social world; to them he looked like a true disciple of Christ. Throughout my conversation with him, I had the feeling that I had met a genuine apostle, a man who had found the truth. It would not be exaggerating to say I felt that I was talking to a saint.

He offered Mass in his room at 6:30 in the evening, after his flock had finished work. Men in their working clothes loudly called out their prayer intentions at the mementos for the living and the dead and without hesitation confessed their faults of the day. His "parish" was like some primitive Christian church of porters or dockhands at Ostia or Corinth.

NO one would think of denying that the priest-workers give witness of a life fully in accord with the Gospels or that striking conversions result from their apostolic labors. To be sure, there have been a few defections and failures in their ranks; but that was several years ago and involved young priests who were poorly prepared for a life of such hardship. Today the requirements for admission to this work are very severe; men no longer enter the Mission lightly.

The movement has been criticized by many who are unfamiliar with the actual poverty of the French worker or who, through mental laziness, refuse to consider the least change in existing socio-economic structures. The movement is reproached for opposing, explicitly or implicitly, the established order—what Mounier called the established *dis*order. These priests are also accused of being, or becoming, revolutionaries—and thus of being in favor of Communism.

Basically their critics would like them to be content with preaching the Gospel without bothering about the workers' temporal problems. Their detractors would be delighted if the priests in this movement would lead the working masses away from Communism by having them pass into the bosom of the Church, after having first removed from them all revolutionary virus.

But it is obviously impossible to attempt institutional change in the condition of the workers without running into Communists here and there. In the great majority of French working districts, local administrators and union organizers are ardent members of the Party. If there is a problem of shelter, help for the aged, summer camps for the underprivileged, aid of any kind, it would be foolish to try to do something effective without the cooperation of these local officials.

No one can live in the workers' milieu and be at the same time a true Christian, without perceiving with extreme anxiety the problem of radically transforming the economic, political and social structures of our present French society. The French working class will never be Christianized—nor the European workers in general—by the sort of fishing by hook and line involved in rare individual conversions. The priest-workers, and all the militant Christians in France, are counting rather on time, history and the transformation of the workers' environment through structural change.

IT is a great temptation for such men—caught up as they are in the workers' furious battle and acutely conscious of extreme human and Christian need—to commit themselves ever further, to accept responsibilities from unions, to take part in street demonstrations which are more or less political.

What are the limits on their identification with the worker? That is the problem. One of these French priests begins by organizing a soup kitchen for children of the unemployed and ends by taking part in a demonstration against General Ridgway, which has little to do with raising the material and spiritual level of the worker's world.

There *is* a danger of Marxist contamination for these men, let us frankly admit it. The danger of adopting a class mentality, of accepting a Marxist conception of social history, and perhaps in the long run of being disloyal to the charity of Christ which demands harshness toward the sins of the rich but still insists that the sinners be loved as brothers. But as Mauriac put it: "Has there ever been an apostolate without risks? The apostle is always in the hands of sinners; he is always exposed for his brothers in body and in soul."

Who would be bold enough to weigh these dangers and these risks against the immense moral benefit the Church has derived from the existence of this movement? Priests, in full harmony with their bishops, archbishops and cardinals, have decided not only to live in the hovels of the workers but to adopt their dress, their work and their way of earning their daily bread. More effectively than all the sermons in the world—and all

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doctrinal declarations—this fact has attacked the prejudice rooted in the minds of the people who feel that the Church has sold out to capital and is solicitous only for the bourgeoisie.

These priests have raised great hopes among the workers, hopes of seeing Christians and the Church at last actively embarking on the urgent task of giving the workers their true place in the national community. The Communist leaders are well aware of that and launch repeated appeals to Catholics. They would not be so friendly if they did not fear that one day the popularity of the priests with the workers would lessen their own influence.

What fruits can be expected after fifty years of such efforts, such dedication, such sacrifice? I am no prophet. But all significant Catholic thinking in France is not far from the opinion that the creation of the priest-workers movement is one of the most important undertakings in the history of the Church in a century.

These men are not a hidden weakness; they are the honor of the Church in France.

ROBERT BARRAT.

THE STAGE

THE TIME OF THE CUCKOO

IN the Venetian *pensione* Arthur Laurents has created and peopled, in the moral experience which transpires there, and which Harold Clurman so artfully disposes for our contemplation, and especially in Miss Shirley Booth's full-length study of an American spinster's fall from grace, we have the first distinguished play of the season. "The Time of the Cuckoo" is an exciting event: it has met with the desultory and condescending response traditionally accorded the new and the unfamiliar, yet I, for one, believe that this play is the most considerable contribution to our native drama since Miss Lillian Hellman's "The Autumn Garden."

The flavor of the evening at the Empire is decidedly Jamesian. What "The Time of the Cuckoo" recalls, however, is not the late, sombre James, but something rather lighter, drier—perhaps *The Europeans* or *An International Episode*. There is the same preoccupation with the "international theme," the same fine, intelligent asperity, even—though it is sharper in the Laurents work—that benign humor which springs from some deep interior harmony. What is new is the note of loss: would the early James, one wonders, have attempted this Leona Samish, desolate and solitary in a Venetian garden, crying "I'm warm and I'm nice and I'm bright" as the music breaks, and the colored lights go down, and the heavy wooden doors are swung into place?

Mr. Harold Clurman, the director, entered his major phase long ago: it is, consequently, almost impertinent to commend his staging of this play. But the customary skill, passion and control are nonetheless very much in evidence. Is it excessive, perhaps, to grant him credit for establishing so well the *feeling* of the drama? (So much to praise, so little space!) I should like to hold up for observation in our shoddy theatre the guile with which Mr. Clurman has disposed some of the subsidiary figures in Mr. Laurents' scheme. One is a mundane Italian woman, a wonderful Jamesian type, cool, shrewdly investing in life, through indolence just missing corruption; the others are a young American painter and his charming, vapid wife. Between these three, Mr. Clurman creates a rich, ambiguous tension. Even in the physical glimpses we are granted of them —the woman is seen always in languor or repose, the American in attitudes of harsh, angular vitality—there is a perception which marvelously enriches the texture of Mr. Laurents' work.

By the exercise of just such sensibility, Mr. Clurman gives "The Time of the Cuckoo" the weight, consistency and social implication it might easily have lacked.

The eminence to which all these single excellences contribute is, of course, the character of Leona Samish, so memorably limned by Miss Booth. How dear, how familiar a figure she is, with her straw sunhat, her camera, her souvenirs of Venetian glass, her little bits of American patois, and her touching, tentative "Buona Sera." How admirable too, as Miss Booth lets us see, in her oblique humor, her calm contemplation of a nondescript history and a lonely future.

Yet, when the sound of the cuckoo is heard in this land, heralding her season of love, these defenses of Leona Samish go down before the terrible flood of her vulnerability. To her brief, abortive interlude with a middle-aged Venetian shopkeeper, she brings the most delicate, the purest glow of romantic desire; from it she takes the knowledge that the world, imperfect and horribly awry, can be so much smaller than the human heart.

For one moment, Mr. Laurents lets us see Leona thus, buffeted and exposed, in the full waste of her love. Then his intelligence closes down, and he shows us, by a dialectic too subtle for the eye, not her pathos but her tragedy—the peculiar American tragedy of those to whom, because they have expected everything, nothing will ever happen. "Italy?" she says to a street urchin at the end. "Oh, Italy! *Molte bella! Molte bella!*" She has recovered the comic gloss, but you will find Leona aching within you for days.

The honor due Miss Booth must be shared with her company. Gratitude bids me to mention all of them: Lydia St. Clair, Dino DiLuca, Geraldine Brooks, Donald Murphy, Jane Rose, Daniel Reed, Silva Gaselli, Jose Perez, Ruggero Romor. They have conspired

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to make "The Time of the Cuckoo" a document of sensibility which joins the company of Mrs. McCullers' "The Member of the Wedding" and Miss Hellman's "The Autumn Garden." It is altogether possible that future audiences will demand more force and dramatic vigor than these playwrights have been able to command, yet whatever the fact, it is presently incontestable that the theatrical vein being worked by Mr. Laurents and his co-mates and brothers in exile is the only one in which the sap rises freely and the blood runs fresh. (*At the Empire.*)

BUTTRIO SQUARE

TO counsel the ignorant is a work of mercy, and I have never felt more virtuous than in advising anyone tempted to support this narcotic musical enterprise, as follows: cast a cold eye on "Buttrio Square," playgoer, and pass by. There were undoubtedly some survivors of this assault on the public's patience, but quite certainly the audience cannot be numbered among them. (*Suspended at the Century.*)

THE GAMBLER

THE interest of Signor Ugo Betti's drama is exclusively ideological; as a piece of stagecraft, "The Gambler" is dreary and inept, a ponderous inquiry into human responsibility which owes so much to Pirandello, to Kafka and to Sartre, that one concludes by wondering what Signor Betti has contributed at all. Levels of meaning are distressingly dear to the author: he is so intent on denying that a chair is merely an article of furniture, a courtroom a forum of law and a railway station only a juncture of tracks, that one is consistently reminded of Mr. Malcolm Cowley's admonition to readers of contemporary fiction: Don't step on it, it might be a symbol.

In the abysmal performance at the Lyceum, it was difficult to detect merit, but "The Gambler" does culminate in a scene of remarkable intellectual force and persuasiveness. One would, however, need further experience of Betti's work to judge whether he is specifically a dramatic writer, or only that familiar figure, the European *homme des lettres,* who persists in grafting the imaginative form on to dilemmas which seek their proper solution in the academic halls. (*At the Lyceum.*)

BERNARDINE

THE core of Mary Chase's new comedy is the Shamrock Bar & Grill, a wonderful shrine to adolescence, and a seed-bed of the sort of anthropological observation Miss Margaret Mead so hotly pursues. Here, with their cigarettes, their 3.2 beer, their disquisitions on jazz and their innocent erotic phantasies, The Gang passes The Difficult Time. When not detailing the mores of a mythical town called Sneaky Falls, Idaho (where mothers are drafted, and sons send them boxes of cookies) they are busy celebrating the charms of the equally imaginary Miss Bernardine Crud, a unique and pliant *belle dame sans merci.*

Bernardine is a little older than the other girls they know, "a little beat-up;" her eyes telegraph a message —"Live on, boy!"—and she owns a 1952 Cadillac convertible. Like Joyce's Molly Bloom, she knows only one word—"Yes"—and she is what an earnest sociologist might call the Love Goddess of this rather desperate and beleaguered male outpost ("Oh Bernardine, Our Bernardine, The Cruds may come, the Cruds may go").

To revive an old issue, Miss Chase's gifts are properly those of fancy, not imagination. She has retained in middle life that taste for private lore, that exuberant ability to remake the world in one's own image which distinguishes ages of innocence. What "Bernardine" makes delightfully clear is just how far fancy can carry you in the theatre: in this case, past commonplace plot, non-existent technique, highly erratic performance and some of the dullest staging currently on view. Johnny Stewart is likeable though rather Broadway as Bernardine's chief victim, but the evening unquestionably belongs to Michael Wager and John Kerr, two of the Cambridge Brattle Theatre's brightest alumni. (*At the Playhouse.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

AND SO TO BED

NO one can deny that Producer Stanley Kramer has courage and imagination. Several years ago he came up with one of the first (and still one of the best) of the pictures about racial discrimination: "Home of the Brave." He followed this with other good films, the themes of which were by no means sure-fire: "The Men," "Champion," and "Cyrano de Bergerac."

Two of Kramer's movies, "My Six Convicts" and "High Noon," won applause earlier this year. And right now, while the fearless Mr. Kramer is trying to solve the knotty problems involved in the filming of "The Caine Mutiny," two of his newest pictures are in first-run houses: "The Happy Time" (reviewed in The Commonweal Sept. 26) and "The Four Poster" (which sets a precedent by having only two characters in its cast).

Stanley Kramer must be aware by now that if he is going to continue making daring and imaginative pic-

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tures he is likely to slip every now and then. I think "The Four Poster" is one of his slips. The business of having only two people (even though very personable actors like Lilli Palmer and Rex Harrison) in a full-length movie and a single set (even though the furniture in that set changes many times as we follow this marriage from the wedding night in 1897 until many years later when the husband is left alone to mull over his memories) grows a little tiresome.

Irving Reis has directed his two players well and has tried to get as much motion as he could with a camera that was always limited by four walls. At times you even forget about being confined in one room in a brownstone building in New York's Sutton Place. But you don't quite believe the film's major premise that only two people are important to a marriage and that we need therefore see no one else.

On the stage, Jan de Hartog's play seemed like a cute trick—although even there I got tired of its cuteness, but I was never annoyed that we didn't see the husband and wife out of their bedroom or that other people didn't come into the room. But in the movie, since the camera can go anyplace and show us anyone, we keep wondering why we don't see other locations or why, at least, other people don't come into the room—especially the son and daughter who *are* important to this couple.

If one can accept the artificial limitations of "The Four Poster," one is likely to enjoy the movie. In some respects, I liked it better than the play. The movie script by Allan Scott is based on Jan de Hartog's original play (instead of the stage version shown in New York which emphasized comedy) and has several touching and tender scenes which frequently verge on the sentimental. Because there are more varied situation in the movie, life seems more full for the couple on the screen.

Lilli Palmer is charming and thoughtful throughout —as the shy bride, as the young matron, as the irate wife who has just discovered her husband's interest in another woman, as the bereaved mother, as the restless woman in her forties who thinks she's no longer needed, and as the elderly wife who only hopes she and her husband can live out the rest of their lives together. As the husband, Rex Harrison is a little too coy and suave, but he is a good enough actor to convince us that he is genuinely in love with his wife and happy with her.

Other than the fact that "The Four Poster" has only two characters, its most startling innovation is its use of animated cartoons as interscenes between the various episodes that make up this story of a marriage. Brilliantly executed under the production of Stephen Bosustow, these cartoons are a series of realistic and surrealistic romps showing us what's going on in the world outside of that confining bed-sitting room: the husband at work as a schoolteacher and later as an author idolized by women's clubs, the couple's belated honeymoon when they go on a whirlwind trip through Europe in their forties. There are also various quick, impressionistic animated cartoons depicting the period: the speak-easy era, Lindbergh's triumphant parade, Coolidge being made Indian chief. And there is one sad sequence indicating the horrors of war and the death of this couple's son. Even though these cartoons steal the show, the live actors manage to hold your attention—because they are telling a story that is of interest to all married people. And for once the advertisements for a movie are correct: "The Four Poster" *does* present the case for the double bed.

THERE are a couple of other new movies about marriages, but nothing to take seriously. In "Everything I Have Is Yours," Marge and Gower Champion play a husband-and-wife team who are well known in the theater. The world seems to crash around them when they discover they're going to have a baby; and during the following years they never quite have sense enough to pick up the pieces. Although they are devoted to their daughter, they get involved in petty jealousies and the glamor of their own careers. Actually this plot is pretty superficial, and it is unfortunate that such a good dance team as the Gowers weren't given something more thoughtful in the first picture in which they play the leads. They do some entertaining song-and-dance numbers with the help of Monica Lewis and others; and if you're not too selective you may be amused by this fluff.

FLUFF is also the word for "My Wife's Best Friend," a giddy comedy in which the acting is better than the material. Anne Baxter and Macdonald Carey portray a couple celebrating their eighth anniversary on a flight to Honolulu. When the plane gets in trouble, they regretfully confess their faults: she because she's been such a nagging wife, and he because he was once attracted to her best friend. Well, the plane doesn't crash and that nagging little wife makes the most of her husband's confession. Actually the story gets pretty thin and bristles with the idea that even a sound, eight-year-old marriage has little to hold it together. The script by Isobel Lennart has some amusing lines, but the best thing about this whole concoction are the episodes in which Miss Baxter, who handles the role expertly, adopts a series of attitudes toward her husband: first a sort of noble, forgiving Joan of Arc, then the patient household drudge, and finally a glamorous Cleopatra.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Second Thoughts of the Second Fabian Generation

NEW FABIAN ESSAYS. Edited by R. H. S. Crossman. Frederick A. Praeger. $4.

By GEOFFREY ASHE

IN 1889, George Bernard Shaw and other Socialist pioneers issued the first collection of Fabian Essays. These were many times reprinted, and exerted much influence on the English Left. Despite the defection of the founders, who ended up as as supporters of Bolshevism, the Fabian Society still jogs on. Its general outlook might fairly be described as Gradualist Extremism. The Fabians want a great deal of Socialism, far more than most pro-Labor groups, but not in too much of a hurry. Their society's emblem (which appears on the dust-cover of the new publication) is a grumpy-looking turtle with the motto "When I strike I strike hard."

These Essays are the product of some hard thinking that has been going on among leading Fabians, most of them Labor members of Parliament, since a conference in the summer of '49. At that time it was obvious that the Labor Party, with its whole traditional program on the statute-book, had no notion of what to do next. It still hasn't. The contributors to this volume are trying to chart a course for it. They include R. H. S. Crossman, a former Oxford don; Ian Mikardo, an industrial consultant; Margaret Cole, the wife of the economist; and John Strachey, erstwhile Minister of Food, who has undergone no fewer than four political conversions—Conservatism to Labor to Mosleyism to Communism to Labor—but still seems as confident as ever.

Crossman (a leading Bevanite, by the way) opens proceedings with a cool assurance that the Left has been talking nonsense for the past century. "The evolutionary and the revolutionary philosophies of progress have both proved false. Judging by the facts, there is far more to be said for the Christian doctrine of original sin than for Rousseau's fantasy of the noble savage, or Marx's vision of the classless society." The first Fabians were about as wrong on these points as they could possibly have been. They are also wrong in their ideological isolationism: their successors have discovered that England is a part of the world. Crossman adds that the Managerial State—not capitalism—is now the real enemy, and that Socialism, far from being a logical development, is a rather unusual kind of retort made by "social conscience" to the managers and the bureaucrats.

The rest of the book does not measure up to its astonishing start. There is much material, some of it pretty sound, about the growth of England's peculiar social order and the dangers inherent in it. A good deal of this was being said four or five years ago, notably by Christopher Hollis and other Catholic writers, in the full tide of Labor triumph. But at least there is satisfaction in learning that the progressives have caught up with the reactionaries.

C. A. R. Crosland, the writer of the second essay, describes the present system as Statism. It is partial capitalism plus partial managerialism plus various things injected by social conscience, all under government control. The line of thinking is that Statism will become Socialism when social conscience has brought essential human equality. Crosland follows up with the flat statement that democratic industrial relations are the key to further progress. The conception of the two "sides" of industry, and of society at large, must be done away with. He is backed by Austen Albu, a former works manager, and by Ian Mikardo. Mikardo points out, however, that workers at the moment show hardly any inclination to fit themselves for the tasks of management. They will need a lot of training.

On foreign policy, the outlook of the New Fabians is confusing. They are far less anti-American than some would suppose. But while approving the link with the U.S., they offer a surely incompatible scheme for scotching Communism with kindness. One can hardly exaggerate the importance of Tito in current English Socialist thought. He is held up as the proof that heresy can succeed—that non-Muscovite Communism is possible. Hence, it is urged, Britain should act friendly towards the Chinese People's Republic, and come to terms with colonial rebellion even where it is Communist-led. If the Marxian empire is threatened from outside, it will stick together, but otherwise it will fall apart, or, at any rate, decline as a menace.

Such is the New Fabian reasoning. It will convince few people whose minds are not already made up. But indeed, the whole question of the Fabians' attitude to Marxism is unresolved.

Careful denunciation of Marxist theory does not count for much against manifest preparation for Marxist practice. Take even the doctrine that Socialism is a product of social conscience working against the trend of the times. It sounds most unlike Marxism. Nevertheless, the results might not be very different. What exactly does "social conscience" mean? Who interprets it at a given moment? Crossman's concept bears an ominous resemblance to Rousseau's "general will," or, for that matter, to Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat." The general will, as construed by those who insisted on it most loudly, meant the guillotine and the first essay in total war. The dictatorship of the proletariat, as put into effect by its arch-priest, meant . . . well, dictatorship.

Are we to infer that "social conscience" expresses itself through elections? This seems very dubious. In England there is no constitutional method for taking a referendum on a specific issue. The bulk of the voters, at the time of Labor's great victory, probably did want social security and a national health service and State ownership of the ruined coal-mines. Few, however,

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cared much for steel nationalization, and four years later it was plain by every recognized test that England had thought the project over and decided against it. Yet the Government, cheered on by the Fabians, alleged a mandate and pushed ahead. Was that "social conscience"? Most of the Fabians, such as Crosland, today demand a fresh nationalization program, which not one Englishman in ten would endorse. Is that "social conscience"? Isn't the demand a shade reminiscent of the Communists' claim that they really speak for the workers even when the workers say the exact opposite?

And, some doubt exists as to the New Fabians' right to talk in moral terms. Listen to Roy Jenkins, an acute and enterprising fellow, who on page 81 drops a truly amazing brick. Defending the Labor policy of compensating expropriated shareholders, he says that this was forced because nationalization was only partial: one could hardly despoil railway-owners and leave cotton-owners untouched. If nationalization had been complete, straight confiscation would have been "logically defensible." I cannot find that he contemplates any other sort of defensibility. Robbery, in fact, is OK if you rob everybody at once.

No, the fuss about social conscience and democratic righteousness is not convincing. The safest estimate of these salaried philanthropists (there is no person remotely like a worker among them) would be as follows. What they want is a thoroughly planned Utopia, in which everybody will be busy and well-cared-for and free to rise from the ranks, and in which, quite incidentally of course, their own sort will be powerful and respected for as long as their own lives last.

But since Crossman has now informed us that until just the other day the entire Left was radically wrong, it is hard to feel much confidence in anything which the Left proclaims. The New Fabian future is a guess. The New Fabian Essays will not stir society as the old ones did. And the New Fabians themselves? What will they be saying in ten years' time?

Yesterdays of Katherine Ann Porter

THE DAYS BEFORE. By Katherine Anne Porter. Harcourt Brace. $4.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

HAS a precedent been established by Miss Bankhead, for Southern Belles to have their likenesses on the front cover, and not, as most authors more discreetly direct, on the back of their autobiographies? Another pattern set by Miss Bankhead has also been pursued by Miss Porter: that of delivering personal attacks from behind the comparative safety of hard covers. Miss Bankhead in her book settles several feuds with various females; Miss Porter, in hers, ploughs heavily into the late Gertrude Stein. In this collection of papers "written throughout my thirty years as published writer," which Miss Porter hopes will provide her reader with "the shape, direction and connective tissue of a continuous, central interest and preoccupation of a lifetime," she offers three views of Miss Stein.

When Miss Porter had herself been in print barely a decade, she thought (1927) Miss Stein's *Making of Americans* "a very necessary book." Her *Second Wind* view, written in parody of Miss Stein's infinitely imitable style, does not commit Miss Porter. Her final judgment (what I tell you three times is true) describes Gertrude, newly in her wooden coffin (1947) as a wooden umbrella, and tells All! "Success in this world, here and now, was what Miss Stein wanted . . . she had never learned who she was, and yet suddenly she had become somebody else . . . and . . . her mind, so long shapeless and undisciplined, could not now express any knowledge out of its long willful ignorance."

It would seem that Miss Porter is annoyed because Miss Stein is more concerned with language than with literature. Her "unshapely mind," that William James admired and that first had studied medicine, was finally concerned with the refurbishing of words, whereas Miss Porter's whole attempt "has been to discover and understand human motives, human feelings, to make a distillation of what human relations and experiences my mind has been able to absorb".

Miss Porter deals more kindly with others of her sex. She is astonishingly perceptive about Katherine Mansfield, who "turned away from what she knew, to pursue some untenable theory of personal salvation under a most dubious teacher (Gurdjieff)." There is a cry of recognition, almost maternal, in her approval of Eudora Welty. Edith Sitwell and Virginia Woolf have rarely received more exquisitely intelligent praise. But it is Willa Cather, so completely a contrast to herself, that Miss Porter loves best. "I never knew her at all, nor anyone who did know her," she explains. She found her books, early, for herself. And then, through the inordinate clutter and maze of her own immediate life, getting published, writing ballet librettos, listening to new music, going to studios to admire Klees and Modiglianis still wet from the brush, she came back to Willa Cather. And it is wonderfully right and just that the sensitive, filagree delicate Southern writer, should so admire the solid, homespun, and sensible Northern one (granted, of course, that Willa Cather was born in Virginia and wrote her best known books about the Southwest).

They make a perfect pair, these two who have produced the most excellent American short stories ever written by women.

Both are so very, very, American. Miss Porter describes herself as a "Western romantic" and declares that "literally speaking, I have never been out of America." But "my America is a borderland of strange tongues and commingled races, and if they are not American, I am fearfully mistaken." In 1942 she made as memorable, as truly, deeply loving a statement about America as has ever been made, without one cliché, one single word

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of rhetoric. Miss Porter is not only a good writer, she is also a good citizen.

And she is a good woman, though often almost naive. "Marriage is belonging, not possessing," she tells us, and her answers to seven questions, her *House of My Own,* and her essays on women and their problems, are old-fashioned, simple, Christian. Challenged, Miss Porter can put on an apron and cook, clean house, or cope "when the bairnee greets," but when she does these, when she delivers her views on life, she is comfortably close to us, and cosy: we need pay no mind, we can take it or leave it. But when she speaks about literature, then, we *must* listen.

The World As a Nightmare

THE LAZY ONES. By Albert Cossery. Translated by William Goyen. New Directions. $2.75.

By JOHN F. SULLIVAN

IT would be at least an amusing parlor game to try to compile a list of images for the world characteristic of given authors or centuries. One might, for instance, argue with some plausibility that Chaucer saw the world as a pilgrimage, that Shakespeare saw it as a stage, the eighteenth century as a formal garden, the nineteenth as a machine. In our own century no single image, perhaps, has established itself as characteristic, but there have been two of singular interest. The first was most popular just after World War I; it was Eliot's image of the world as a wasteland. The second image has been occurring more and more frequently since World War II (in the work of Paul Bowles, for example); it is that of the world as a nightmare.

Significantly, I think, Eliot's image, while it was certainly critical of the legacy of nineteenth century materialism, retained the typical nineteenth century feeling that a remedy was available, especially through individual moral reform. But this newest post-war image, undoubtedly an outgrowth, like existentialism, of our common enough feeling of helplessness before such phenomena as the concentration camp or the atomic bomb, offers no hope except the desperate one that we may wake up from our bad dream. This image, with its accompanying gray hopelessness, is the basis of *The Lazy Ones,* the third published work of a young Egyptian "discovered" by Henry Miller.

The dream-allegory is of course one of the oldest of artistic conventions, but in this novel the usual formula is inverted. Instead of falling asleep, as in *Piers the Plowman,* to dream the truth about the world, Cossery's characters sleep to avoid the truth which is the waking world. They appear to sleep soundly; there is no word of a conventional dream. But the world which impinges upon them when they are awake is "a universal nightmare."

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The sleepy characters, the "lazy ones" of the title, are members of what seems to be a middle-class Egyptian family, slaves to a habit of nearly continuous sleep, devoting a kind of desperate energy to insuring that they will be allowed to continue this curious existence. Serag, the youngest son, alone endeavors to escape the perpetual lassitude. His hope, however, is really a "dream." At the end, he has run away, but he is getting sleepy and begins to think of turning back.

Serag dreams particularly of going away to "work." There was once a time when work could be useful and blessed, but even in the nineteenth century the Gospel of Work had become a fraud, and it is now only the most hideous of the compulsions in the nightmare. Serag's brother disillusions him:

> 'Yes,' said Rafik. 'When I was studying to be an engineer, we used to visit factories. They were huge, unhealthy, sad buildings. I spent the most painful moments of my life in them. I've seen the men who work in those factories; only they weren't still men. Their misery was written on their faces. If I left my studies, it was solely because I didn't want to be the head of that horde of sufferers.'
>
> Serag shivered at this lugubrious speech. He closed his eyes and saw his romantic dream of work crumbling, broken in the maze of immeasurable sadness. Work could only be a damnation and a suffering.

It is quite likely, of course, that this view of the suffering of the worker, indeed that the whole nightmare-allegory, has a special application to the situation of Egypt, the author's native land. Some, at least, of the grim scenes in the novel are undoubtedly only too completely realistic. In this respect, a comparison with *Peer Gynt* seems apt, for that was also in part a satirical, nightmare-embellished portrait of mid-nineteenth century Norway. Yet the value of *Peer Gynt* as a work of art lies entirely outside its particular application to a particular situation, and so, I think, it is with this novel. (It is a slighter work, of course, than *Peer Gynt,* but no less a work of art.)

The question posed by the novel is essentially reducible to something like this: Is the world as truly a hopeless nightmare as the characters in the novel are made to feel it? Is there still some life in Serag's dreams, or is this view of his brother the only reality?

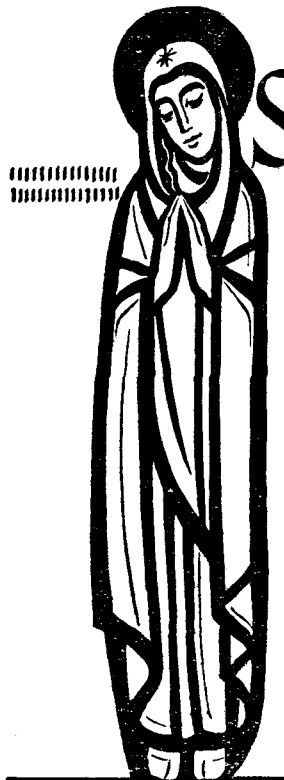
> The collective insanity of mankind had never astonished him more. He knew its many forms. The cafe properietor was as mad as his old mother! They were all mad. There was no salvation anywhere in the world.

Douglas Abroad

BEYOND THE HIGH HIMALAYAS. By William O. Douglas. Doubleday. $5.

By GARY MAC EOIN

SUPREME COURT Associate Justice Douglas, author of two best-selling travel books, presents a fascinating account of a six-week



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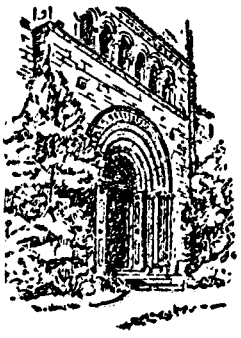

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trek last year by yak, mule, donkey and on foot through the breathless, beautiful passes of the Himalayas of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, by the borders of China, the USSR and Tibet.

He is the ideal traveler. His interests and knowledge extend far: to blue poppies, lizards, yak butter, folk songs, religions, land tenure, trade routes, family and race relationships. Equally at home in huts in which these mountaineers live in unbelievable poverty, in lama monasteries, in royal palaces, and with his muleteers on the trail, he can attune and adjust himself to the customs and conditions of each place without either losing his identity or betraying condescension. And he selects and records his experiences in words that carry the reader into the intimacy of his own pleasure of discovery.

One can accordingly appreciate the anger of the Communists who at the time of his trek violently denounced Mr. Douglas as American spy and agent provocateur. For the impressions this unofficial ambassador left in palaces and in hovels must have profoundly set back the anti-American propaganda that forms an integral part of the Communist plan to dominate Asia. And the new insight his book brings to Americans of these people, their hopes, aspirations, ideals and ways of thought, must likewise help reduce the anti-Americanism of Asiatics in as much as it thrives no less on their ignorance of us than on ours of them.

But Mr. Douglas is not content to give us a first-rate travel book, not even one that includes sixteen reproductions of Kodachromes and twenty-six of black-and-white photographs all expertly taken by himself, eight pages of transcriptions of Himalayan music, and an appendix on the needs of the Himalayan traveler. *Beyond the High Himalayas* attempts also to describe the political problems of the area in relation to the very real threats of Communism and of Soviet imperialism.

This part of the book I found less satisfying on two counts. It crams so much unfamiliar history and geography as to exhaust without orienting the average reader. And it expresses precisely the opinions that might be anticipated from one with the author's socio-political viewpoint, even had he never got nearer Central Asia than Central Park.

His main proposals (I do not attempt to resolve the contradictions) are as follows. Withdraw from military bases in Asia. Stop subsidizing existing governments. Stop working with the politicians. Identify America with the peasants. Encourage the social revolution. Create Asian Yugoslavias. Send bright young people to teach the "democratic faith" and American material techniques at the village level.

Whatever one's views on this program, one cannot but be impressed by the sense of urgency Mr. Douglas conveys. History is being made as inexorably in Central Asia today as it has been made in China in the past twenty years. And in this case, also, the initiative still lies with the Communists.

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Europe: the Historical Continent

UNDERSTANDING EUROPE. By Christopher Dawson. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

By JOHN CONNOR

THERE are few literary experiences as unrewarding as the reading of a "timely" book. Arguments can be made for newspapers, but surely profit is usually the motive for a timely book. "Starched and stony is the soil which (journalism) has prepared to receive the seeds of genius," said Lord Bryce in his classic. It remains true, though, that Christopher Dawson's *Understanding Europe* is both timely and valuable. It is timely by accident. The optimists at Strasbourg—and those all over the world who pray for their success—could not have designed a more heartening and valid support for their position than Dawson has offered them.

There has been, unfortunately, an aura of political unreality associated with even the best of the book-length pleas for world government or supra-national governments. Dawson presents no "how-to" on supra-national government. (Strasbourg supplies this with compelling political reality.) What he does present is ample proof that Europe not only can be, but has been, and—in essence—still is a single "society of peoples." It is impossible "to judge the importance of a culture by the artificial regulations of temporary international organization," says Dawson, and goes on to prove (without shutting his eyes to the reality of Europe's present governmental organization) that the autonomy of the European states is "artificial."

It needs to be emphasized that this book was not written with Strasbourg in mind, so that two further points may be noted which lend both hopefulness to the present European adventure and value to the book. First, there is Dawson's case for the "spiritual unity" of Europe and his nice choice of the word "spiritual" to express his point. He sees Europe as the only "historical" continent; all the others are geographical. Essentially it is a continent only because of its spiritual (religio-cultural) unity.

Secondly, in this book the concept is of the ultimate European nation as being strongly regionalist in character. There is completely lacking the monolithic, political structure which has made most world-government suggestions (which, it must be repeated again, *Understanding Europe* is not) lack verisimilitude. While this regionalism has provided the matrix necessary for the nationalism which has been Europe's curse for two centuries, it remains potentially a source of great strength. The vast, incoherent namelessness of the Oriental societies, while in some ways a source of physical strength, contributes to their political weakness. In Europe, contrariwise, even those chance organizations that do pass for states—Switzerland, Spain, Yugoslavia—are variegated to an extreme.

There are perceptive and challenging concepts scattered throughout this brief history. "The United Nations is . . . the organ of a world wide community which does not yet exist . . . (Its) failure to recognize the importance of . . . organic cultural communities (such as Europe) is the great weakness of all schemes of international organization that are based either on abstract rights and the equality of sovereign states or on purely material standards like size and population."

A second example might be: "[While the new technology was] the monopoly of the same people that had produced the individualist culture the difficulty did not arise: liberty, democracy, and scientific technique were allies. But the situation was utterly different when the movement passed to societies that knew nothing of personal freedom . . . (These) were in some ways better adapted to scientific mass organization than those which put the rights of the individual first."

Dawson is—in the sense of the word that Peter Viereck has tried to popularize—a conservative. For example, he does *not* see the "reawakening" of Asia as an endemic development. It is to his mind completely a product of European political science, with certain—accidental—Oriental embellishments. Nor can he visualize self-government as the panacea which it is in world opinion and (as a result of this opinion-pressure) in the conclaves of the United Nations. He is quite aware of the damage self-government in the wrong places has done already, and quite fearful of what it can do in the future.

To Dawson readers there is nothing new in the basic arguments offered in his latest book, although there are some further indications of the comprehensiveness of his knowledge of history. For any audience Dawson has to offer a firm grasp of both history and the present reality expressed lucidly but without weakening simplification.

Family Matters

THE BUILD-UP. By William Carlos Williams. Random House. $3.50.

By T. E. CASSIDY

WILLIAM Carlos Williams has written a full-bodied novel about a wonderful family, the Stechers. The father, Joe, is a German immigrant. His wife, Gurlie, is Norwegian. Their children are Lottie, Flossie, and Paul. The book is the story of their lives in America, and of their transformation into Americans—successful, simple, lovable people whose hearts are close to one another. They have their small and big troubles, but they prosper and flourish, and, largely through Gurlie's drive, they become a thoroughly meaningful and important factor in their home town.

The events narrated in the book are such as might occur to any family. Joe achieves distinction in the business world, and concurrently Gurlie makes their way socially, because she is of the firm conviction that they are meant to be important people. You can say that Gurlie is the central figure of the story. She is a dynamic and positive person, and her knowledge of her husband

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and her children is infallibly acute. In fact, her knowledge of people is the same, and she is never wrong in her sensing of a situation and her resolution of a problem.

There is no great theme here—just a pile of happenings unfolding with the years. No great message emerges, no symbols are traced, no subtlety exists or is intended. Even the tragedies that occur are almost every-day affairs, for the reader is never overwhelmed by any great impact of disaster. And the humor is constant, normal, and friendly—a sort of kitchen fun every now and again.

The writing has some distinctive qualities. Williams brings off, for example, a remarkable job of dialogue. A large part of the book is conversational, and it is easy, ready talk—nothing stilted or labored. This is not a simple thing to achieve, especially when you have the extra task of imparting a national flavor to some of the speech. Gurlie's talk well fits her personality, and she has the added charm of candor. Williams also brings his poetic touch to the descriptive passages—and although the detail of scenes, houses, and such things as cooking might well become tiresome, that is not the case here. Above all, I think, you get the feeling of great simplicity and quiet power in the characterizations. The people are real and unforced. The range of their experience is broad, and the episodes such as the birth of Paul are splendidly human and homely. For an occasional real burst of riot, Gurlie's scene with Father Kelly is good, effective fun. All in all, this is a story to enjoy and cherish.

REVIEWERS

Geoffrey Ashe has written on political and literary questions for journals in this country and in his native England. He is now living in Canada.

John F. Sullivan teaches at the University of Detroit.

Gary MacEoin is the editor of *Hacienda*, a South American agricultural review.

John Connor is a new contributor to The Commonweal whose home is in Elizabeth, N. J.

T. E. Cassidy is a member of the Fordham faculty.

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